

Melissa Clarke
Education Committee Testimony
RE: Education Funding Bills SB 948, SB 949 and SB 886
Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Good evening members of the Appropriations Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about education in my community and my son Akeem's school.

I moved to Waterbury from New York several years ago. I chose Waterbury without really knowing much about what the educational options were in the community. As I began to learn about the schools available for my son, I quickly realized I would need to enroll him in lotteries for the local magnet and charter schools. I am happy to say that Akeem was granted a seat in Brass City Charter School in Waterbury as a pre-k student - he is now in first grade. I have been very happy with my son's school. He is being exposed to so many wonderful things.

Charter schools, even though they are public schools, have historically not been funded fully or represented in the state's ECS formula. This year Governor Lamont took an important first step towards rectifying these inequities by proposing to raise charter school student per-pupil funding to the foundation amount, the amount that all other public school children receive. When I learned about this proposed increase I was filled with joy that my child and their classmates were finally going to be valued by the state in the same way that their other public school peers were. I hope that you all, as elected leaders in our state, will ensure that this increase passes so that my son and his classmates can thrive.

Today I urge you to please continue to be supportive of all public school students and help to ensure that they receive not only the minimum for education funding but everything that they need to be successful. For true equity, all of these students and their schools would be funded at not only the foundation amount but also in a way that meets their needs.

While I am so happy that my son is getting a great education at Brass City Charter School in Waterbury, I want all children in my community to have the same opportunities. I again want to express my sincere hope that you will work to support my son, and other students like him so that they can continue learning and growing in the schools right for them.

Thank you for fighting for us.

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